

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /093 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:JKBISHOP:LLC
APPROVED BY NEA:NAVELIOTES
AF/W:DKILLION (INFO)
EUR/WE:MR. HUGHES

-----002621 231743Z /56

R 231240Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MADRID
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 306054

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS SP MO SS AL

SUBJECT: SPANISH POLICY ON WESTERN SAHARA

1. DURING DECEMBER 21 CALL ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VELIOTES, SPANISH AMBASSADOR ROVIRA ASKED WHY HASSAN'S STATE VISIT WAS POSTPONED, NOTING THAT SPANISH EMBASSIES IN SOME ARAB CAPITALS HAD REPORTED MOROCCAN DISSATISFACTION WITH U.S. DELAY IN RESPONDING TO ARMS REQUEST MIGHT HAVE BEEN MOTIVE. VELIOTES EXPLAINED KING FREQUENTLY HAD CANCELLED STATE VISITS AND THAT REASONS GIVEN THIS TIME WERE UNCERTAIN STATE OF MIDDLE EAST AND DESIRE TO SUPERVISE PLANNED MOVEMENT OF MOROCCAN TROOPS TO MAURITANIA. VELIOTES ASSURED AMBASSADOR POSTPONEMENT WAS NOT PRODUCT
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OF, NOR HAS IT CREATED, ANY STRAIN IN U.S.-MOROCCAN RELATIONS.

2. ROVIRA EXPRESSED CONCERN AT REPORTS OF FRENCH MILITARY ACTION AGAINST POLISARIO AND ASKED IF WE HAD DETAILS. VELIOTES NOTED REPORTS THAT FRENCH AIRCRAFT PARTICIPATED IN ATTACK ON POLISARIO COLUMN WHICH IT APPEARS WAS

RETURNING FROM RAIDS IN MAURITANIA. HE GUESSED THIS MIGHT BE THE CASE AND, IF SO, SURMISED THE FRENCH WERE SENDING A MESSAGE TO THE ALGERIANS/POLISARIO THAT THEY

INTENDED TO PROTECT THEIR NATIONALS IN MAURITANIA. ROVIRA EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR FRENCH IMPATIENCE WITH POLISARIO, STATING THAT TAKING OF SPANISH HOSTAGES HAD UNDERMINED SOME OF THE SUPPORT POLISARIO ENJOYS ON SPANISH LEFT.

3. ASKED TO DESCRIBE HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE SAHARA CONFLICT, AMBASSADOR SAID HIS GOVERNMENT MUST BE CAUTIOUS BECAUSE SPANISH SOCIALISTS WHO WERE SUBJECT TO ALGERIAN INFLUENCE EVEN BEFORE FRANCO'S DEATH NOW SUPPORT POLISARIO. VULNERABILITY OF SPANISH ENCLAVES TO MOROCCAN MILITARY INTERVENTION ALSO PROMPTS RESTRAINT, AND GIVES SPANISH MILITARY IMPORTANT VOICE IN FORMULATION OF MADRID'S SAHARAN POLICY. HE COMMENTED MOROCCO COULD OBTAIN MILITARY VICTORY MORE EASILY BY INVADING ENCLAVES THAN BY ATTACK ON TINDOUF. SPAIN WOULD SERVE AS INTER-MEDIARY ONLY IF THIS COULD BE DONE WITHOUT OFFENDING ANY OF THE PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE. AMBASSADOR SAID THERE HAS BEEN NO RECENT CHANGE IN SPANISH POLICY REGARDING CONFLICT AND PREDICTED THAT DOMINANCE OF DOMESTIC ISSUES IN SPAIN WILL CONTINUE DIVERT ATTENTION FROM WHAT ADMITTEDLY IS A MAJOR SPANISH FOREIGN POLICY CONCERN.

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4. AT AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST, VELIOTES ALSO BRIEFED HIM ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, DRAWING ON GUIDANCE PROVIDED EMBASSY VIA SEPTTEL.
VANCE

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